



# *The HPD News*

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## Truck Enforcement Unit Acquires New Trucks

The Houston Police Department's Truck Enforcement Unit has acquired 11 new pickup trucks that are a much-needed tool for officers in their efforts to crack down on unsafe big rigs traveling the city's roadways.

The pickup trucks are 2002 Chevrolet Silverados with extended cabs. The trucks have increased interior space with state-of-the-art equipment like laptop computers, printers, citizens band radios, portable weight scales, and built-in bookcases.

The pickup trucks have sliding/locking bed covers that protect all equipment from outside elements. Weight scales are easier for officers to handle, thereby reducing the risk of injuries.

Before this equipment was added, truck enforcement officers were spending about 75 minutes for each Level One truck safety inspection, which is the most thorough of inspections. Officers will now spend about 60 minutes per inspection, which averages one extra truck inspection each day.

A truck enforcement officer can enter an inspection report in his laptop computer, print it, and give it to the truck driver to show what repairs need to be made to make the truck safer. The on-board computer allows the officer to write a report faster than writing it longhand.

The 11 Silverados cost about \$190,000 and were purchased with drug forfeiture money. After buying these pickup trucks, 11 patrol cars were transferred out of the Truck Enforcement Unit and placed back into patrol use. The cost to convert each pickup truck with the necessary equipment was about \$9,000 less than converting an existing patrol car with similar equipment. In fact, the department bought four new patrol cars with the added savings.

One of the many advantages of these Silverados includes a higher ground clearance for easier access to accident scenes involving large commercial trucks.

There are 40 Houston police officers working in the Traffic and Accident Division's Truck Enforcement Unit. They conduct task force operations several times a year to inspect trucks for safety violations.



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## Chief's Column

by Acting Chief of Police T. N. Oettmeier

The Houston Police Department recently held a Promotions and Awards Ceremony with historic significance added to it. It was the first time the department promoted two women to captain in the same ceremony. Captain Vicki King will command the Eastside Division and Captain Debra Watkins will command the Helicopter Division. Also promoted were Captain James Jones (Hobby Airport), Captain Brian Lumpkin (Fondren Division), and Captain Donald McKinney (Northwest Division). There were 10 lieutenants and 22 sergeants promoted.

The Crisis Intervention

Team (CIT) Appreciation and Awards Banquet was recently held with the following Houston police officers being recognized for their service. Outstanding CIT Officer Awards were presented to Officers Jerry Bennett, Priscilla Chillis, Randy Crowder, Angela Holden, Donald Matheny, Daniel Matthews, Jose Mora, Rhonda Pavlu, Dennis Von Quintus, David Walker, Glen Weinschneider, Elaine Williams, and Mary Young. Receiving Special Recognition Awards were Officers William Bredemeyer, Dee Cisneros, Christopher Cumbess, Douglas Hrcir, Maryann Hrcir, and Robert Musick and HPD Telecommunicators Maria Gonzales, Angela Campbell, and

Patricia Page.

The seventh annual HPD Civilian Personnel Training Conference will be held on Friday, November 8, 2002, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the L.D. Morrison Police Training Academy at 17000 Aldine Westfield Road. If you want to attend, contact your immediate supervisor as soon as possible. A list of the classes being offered this year is available from Jeanne Pressler at 281-230-2398 or Theresa Smith-Donnelly at 281-230-2362. This year's selection of classes reflects new topics that you, as civilian employees, requested as well as programs attendees at previous conferences indicated they wanted to see return.



During the HPD Promotion and Awards Ceremony on Friday, September 20, 2002, five lieutenants were promoted to the rank of captain, 10 sergeants were promoted to the rank of lieutenant, and 21 officers were promoted to the rank of sergeant. In the photo on the above left, Mrs. Glenda Steed (r.) pins the captain badge on her daughter, Vicki L. King, during her promotion ceremony. In the photo on the right, Aaron Watkins (r.) pins the badge on his mother, Debra J. Watkins, as she is promoted to captain.

## Small Charitable Donations Can Go A Long Way

Each year at this time, City of Houston employees are asked to think of those persons less fortunate and in need of support with a contribution to the Combined Municipal Campaign (CMC).

"It doesn't matter what you contribute," said Jenny Wong with HPD's Community Services Division. "It could be a one-time donation or a donation spread out over each pay period," she said. "No donation is too small."

A small contribution can pay huge dividends to the charity of your choice. For example, a \$1 deduction per pay period (26 per year) from each police employee donated to the Assist the Officer Foundation would provide benefits for injured officers for an entire year. Alternatively, that same collective contribution would provide six month of daycare for a child. A \$2 deduction per pay period from each police employee would provide a week's worth of food for 16 families.

All contributions to the Combined Municipal Campaign are tax-deductible.

In the 2001 CMC drive, ten percent of HPD's employees enrolled and contributed \$73,000 to help fund research and to assist those in need. This year's departmental goal is for 25 percent employee participation. Campaign forms are due to your CMC representative by Friday, October 18, 2002.



## This Month In HPD History: The Goo-Goo Eye Ordinance

The earliest mention of a vice detail in the Houston Police Department was in 1921 when the department's staffing totaled 171 officers, which included its only vice investigator. By 1925, there were three vice investigators in a Vice Squad. Two years later, there were seven investigators including two women. One of the Vice Squad's more publicized cases was the confiscation of 142 gallons of whiskey in October of 1926 during Prohibition.

There were numerous laws to enforce that kept the Vice Squad busy during that era including the "Goo-Goo Eye ordinance," which was defined as "looking at a female in a lewd fashion." That ordinance is now obsolete along with ordinances prohibiting washing an automobile in the street, vagrancy, mooching, passing a streetcar, smoking in a streetcar, and lunacy.

In 1946, the Vice Squad was divided into the Morals Squad and the Gambling Squad. Four years later, they merged back to once again form the Vice Squad. Today's Vice Squad investigates and enforces laws against prostitution, sexually-oriented businesses, liquor license violations, illegal gambling, and public lewdness, to name a few.

## "Kids & Cops" Trading Cards Send Positive Message to Youth

The "Kids and Cops" trading card program is celebrating its fifth year of distribution. More than three million cards have been distributed and 245 officers from Texas to California have participated.

The "Kids and Cops" trading cards are similar to baseball trading cards and are used by Houston police officers to provide a positive message about law enforcement to young people and to improve community relations. The trading card program began at HPD in 1997. The Community Outreach Division coordinates the program and chooses the officers who will be featured on the cards each year based upon certain criteria that the officers must be able to fulfill.

"The officers in the program are heroes to Houston's youth and it's a great way to highlight the many functions of the Houston Police Department," said Joyce Walker, "Kids and Cops" program coordinator. The corporate sponsors for "Kids and Cops" are Guaranty Bank, Home Depot, and KHOU-TV. For more information about the cards, call Ms. Walker at (713) 308-9119.

# Houston Police Offer Halloween Safety Tips



Halloween can provide fond memories but the potential for dire consequences exist if some precautions are not taken. The Houston Police Department offers the following safety tips to help ensure a safe and enjoyable Halloween.

- Participate in an organized Halloween event coordinated through a school, PTO, or community group.
- Children should wear light-colored costumes that are short enough to prevent them from tripping on the fabric. Put reflective tape on the costumes so that trick-or-treaters can be easily seen.
- Pay close attention to traffic at all times.
- Parents are urged to stay with their children at all times. Allow the children to visit only the homes of people they know.
- Children should trick-or-treat only during daylight hours. However, if they will be out after sunset have them carry a flashlight.
- Trick-or-treaters are urged to only accept wrapped or packaged candy. Parents should examine all candy or treats before the children eat them. Candy that appears to have been tampered with should be thrown away.
- Keep costumed children away from pets. An animal may become frightened by the outfit and harm the child or cause the child to panic.
- Avoid hard plastic or wooden props such as daggers or swords. Use foam rubber or soft flexible materials as a substitute.

## HPD Family Assistance Offers Comfort in Times of Need

The Houston Police Department Family Assistance Unit offers comfort to the families of officers and civilian employees during times of tragedy or the loss of a loved one.

Officers Matt Perales and Mike Newsome are the heart of the unit that is designed to meet the needs of all HPD employees and their families. It does not matter if the tragedy or loss occurred while the employee was on duty or off duty.

The Family Assistance Unit began in 1921 as the Burial Assistance Fund and provided monetary assistance with the burial of fallen officers. In 1980, the Family Assistance Unit became the first organized departmental unit given the responsibility of notifying immediate family members of the life-threatening injury or death of an officer or civilian employee.

Officers Perales and Newsome help families with making funeral arrangements or filing for insurance benefits or with grief counseling.

The phone number to Personnel Division's Family Assistance Unit is (713) 308-1240.